

KM World 2000

**Knowledge Sharing within Organizations:  
Linking Art, Theory, Scenarios  
and Professional Experience**

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and

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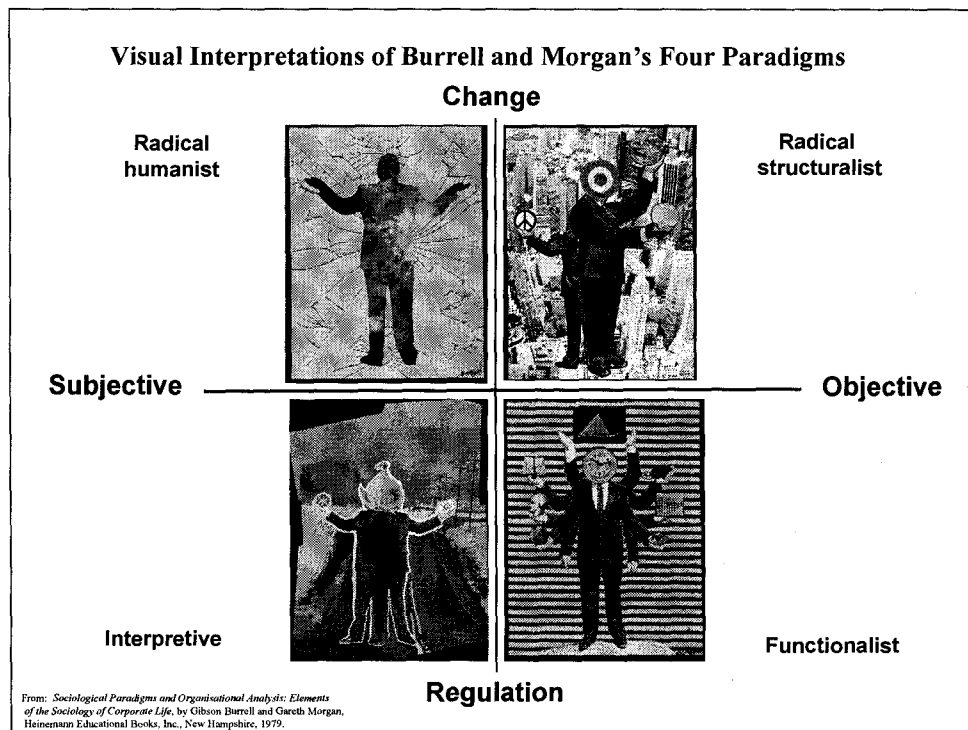
September 13-15, 2000

## Our Agenda

- Introduction - Teresa and Yvette's mutual interest in knowledge sharing.
- Teresa will discuss looking at multiple paradigms within organizations using imagery.
- Yvette will discuss the relationship between paradigms and social exchanges that lead to knowledge sharing.

Welcome, I want to start by telling you about the connection that Yvette and I have -- we met at a Fielding Institute research session when we were both graduate students...I'm still a student but Yvette is now Dr. Burton... we live very different lives, she lives in Manhattan, I'm in LA, she is an organization development practitioner, I'm an artist/librarian, she works for a huge money making corporation, I work for a renowned research institution, she flies all over the world, I'm nestled in an arroyo in the San Gabriel mountains, she has clients trying to leverage knowledge for greater profits, I work with researchers trying to find life in the universe... on the surface it doesn't look like we have much in common, but what we've had in common since our very first encounter is knowledge sharing, and since then we have had many meaningful conversations on what knowledge sharing is and what we should be thinking about it.

In this discussion I'll be sharing some of the ideas I'm working on as a graduate student around knowledge management and Yvette will share her first hand accounts from the field....



This is a visual interpretation I made of a model developed by a pair of organization theorists named Gibson Burrell and Gareth Morgan which was published in the late 70's. The model reveals the multiple paradigms in the field of organization theory and focuses on the differences in the basic values and beliefs they identified - that the members of the paradigms are grounded in.

They developed a 2X2 matrix scheme to help classify and understand the fundamental issues of the paradigms they identified in the field of organization theory -- each quadrant is a paradigm and each paradigm has a unique set of values and beliefs -- the model reveals differences based on two debates of sociology -- subjective and objective -- change and regulation (order).

Burrell and Morgan contributed to the discussion of multiple paradigms because they were concerned about the open hostility, ostrich-like indifference and the poor-quality dialog and debate in the field... they wanted all the voices to be heard and valued -- today, the discussion is still going on.

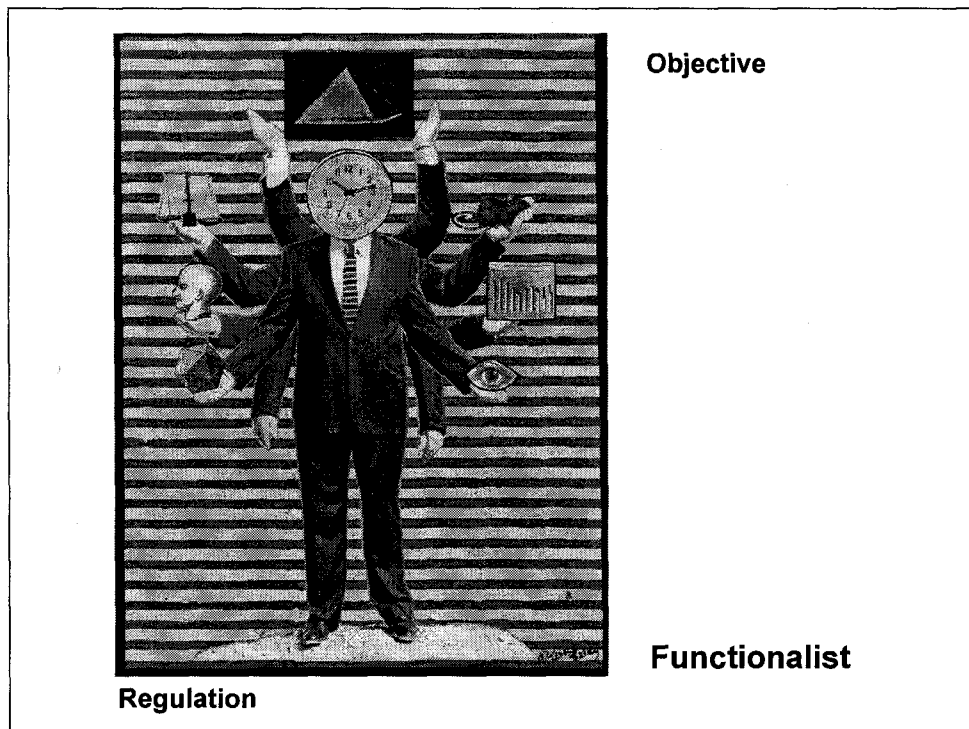
Underlying values and beliefs determine what knowledge is, how it is created and how it is shared, to assume the beliefs and values of others creates systems that are exclusive and short on meaning.

What I want to do here is begin a discussion on the use of imagery and symbols to interpret the paradigms in our organizations, not just the dominant, most valued or most financed, but all the paradigms.

Each of these paradigms has a different definition for knowledge and a different set of values and beliefs for how knowledge is developed and shared.

To see these differences visually, I hope to inspire you to use imagery to understand the paradigms in your organizations. I am going to go through the quadrants one by one, starting with the Functionalist and moving clockwise.

For each paradigm I'm going to ask: What is knowledge? How is knowledge created? And How is knowledge shared?



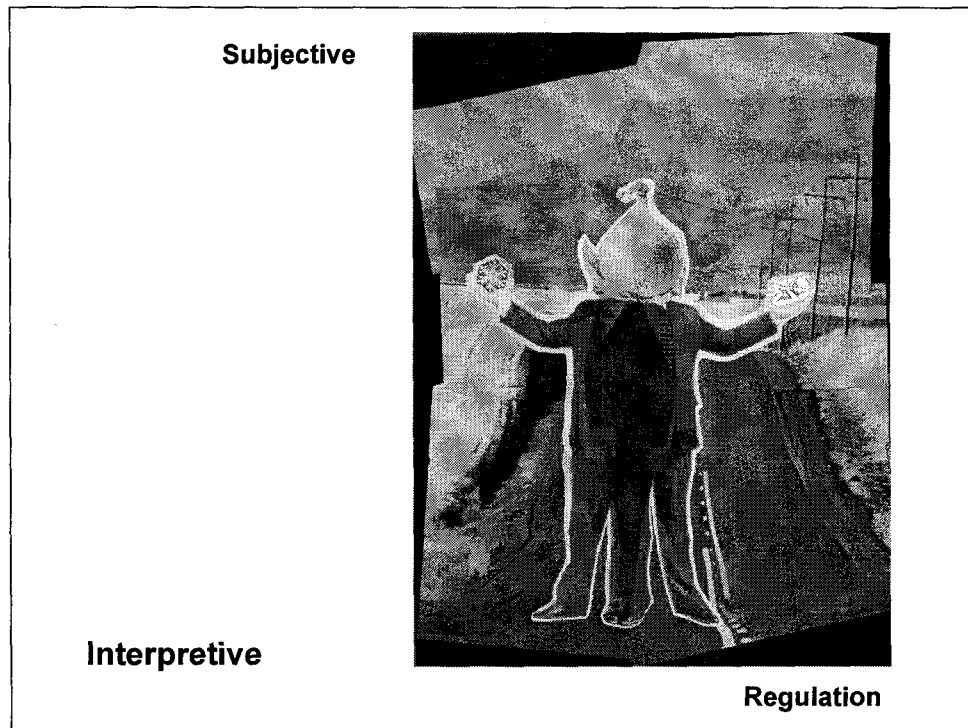
This is the functionalist, they are objective and value regulation (order).

Knowledge is rational, provable, quantifiable, reliable, verifiable. The only knowledge that is worth while is backed up by objective measurement.

Knowledge is created according to scientific method -- We know by testing hypothesis and observing in controlled conditions. We're not that interested in hearing your personal stories, back up your findings with actual data or benchmarking. We believe in standards -- rules and regulations -- seeing is believing.

We believe knowledge is shared within the levels of established, regulated hierarchies.

A good example of a person that fits the functionalist paradigm is Allen Greenspan, his economic policies keep us under control.



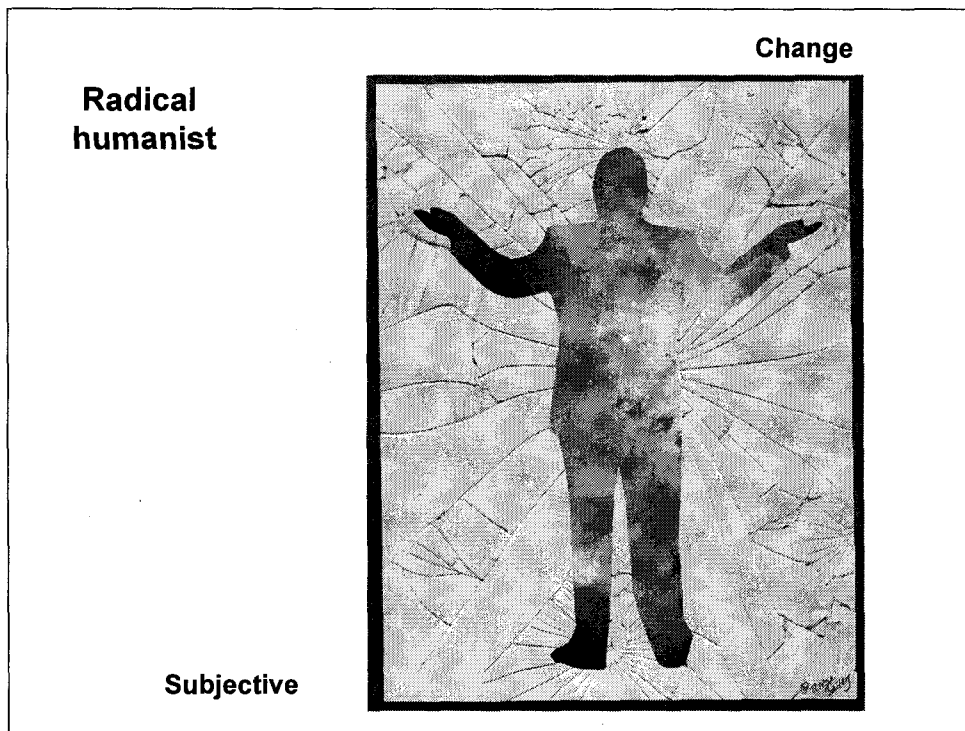
The interpretive paradigm, they are subjective and also value regulation and order.

Knowledge is the meaning behind the work that we are experiencing together. Knowledge isn't a thing, knowledge is a journey where everything is relative.

Knowledge is a process, peeling away the layers reveals new understanding creates new knowledge. Together we create the world through our interactions -- both conscious and subconscious.

Knowledge is shared openly and freely but it has to be experienced.

A good example of a person that fits the interpretive paradigm is Oprah Winfrey, she brings people together and reveals shared meaning.



The radical humanist is subjective but values change over order.

Knowledge is a universe of possibilities. Knowledge is constantly changing and we know through enlightenment.

Knowledge is created by shattering the limitations of existing order and through transcending the constraints of our social arrangements. Knowledge is gaining new perspectives -- new ways of seeing the world.

Knowledge is shared through collaborating to create new paradigms. This is not measured or proven knowledge, but the birth of new knowledge.

A good example of a person that fits the radical humanist paradigm is Dr Martin Luther King, his dream has helped us all see the world differently.

**Change**



**Radical  
structuralist**

**Objective**

The radical structuralist is objective like the functionalist but values change, however it's not the transcending change of the humanist, the structuralist believes in emancipation.

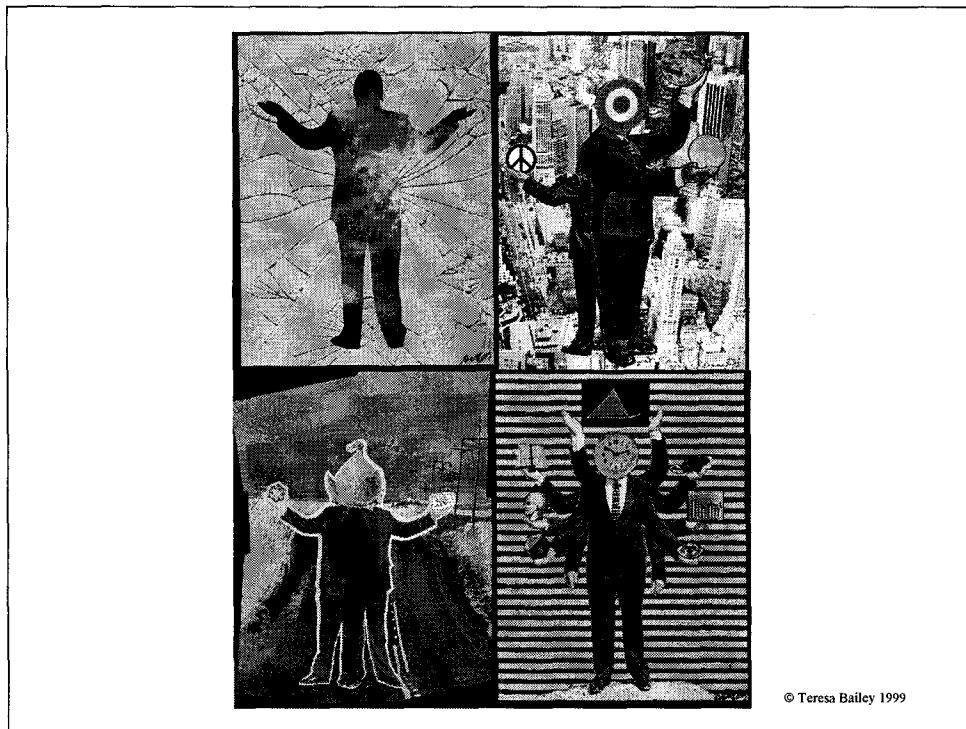
Knowledge is an object, a commodity -- it is power and it emancipates us from the existing structural boundaries and inequalities.

New knowledge is created by continually overthrowing the structures of the dominant oppressor or controller. A new system is created based upon this new knowledge which everyone must then agree to.

The new system is enforced by strong leadership who all look up to -- lives crumble when the paradigm is overthrown.

Knowledge sharing systems are support the power structure but over time the system will be overthrown and a new system will be developed. It is an ongoing cycle repeated over and over.

A good example of a person that fits the radical structuralist paradigm is Bill Gates, he had a powerful vision to get technology too the masses but now he is the target for trying to control too much .



Art connects us to things that make us feel and think and get inspired. Knowledge sharing is about connections, no matter which paradigm, it is a “human experience”.

How dull we would be if our organizations were comprised of just one paradigm-- complexity and diversity is what makes our cultures exciting and innovating.

Some paradigms may be the perfect match for the elegant electronic knowledge sharing systems we create, but some may not.

The paradigms in our organizations need to be explored to deepen understanding and build bridges of communication -- Not so we can unify them or make them less complex -- rather, so we can develop systems that support our multifaceted communities.

What do the paradigms in your organization look like?